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September 29, 2005

To: FCC, Proceeding 05-235  
Re: Retain Morse code Requirement

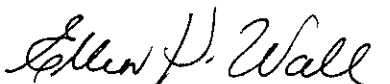
I'm not a ham radio operator nor, as far as I know, am I related to one. I am, however, an English teacher who teaches in a highly complex linguistic community. Communication is difficult. Limiting the ways we can communicate, especially in times of war and natural catastrophes, is short sighted. Please retain, or even increase, the 5 WPM Morse code element as a requirement to obtain an Amateur Radio license.

Its value should be obvious. Because my tech-speak is limited, my wording comes from Wikipedia: Morse code "requires less complex equipment than other forms of radio communication, and it can be used in very high noise/low signal environments. It also requires less bandwidth than voice communications, typically 100-150 Hz, compared to the roughly 4000 Hz of single-side voice. The extensive use of pro-signs, Q-codes, and restricted format of typical messages facilitates communication between amateur radio operators who do not share a common mother tongue and would have great difficulty in communicating using voice modes." As an English teacher, I can assure you that even a shared mother tongue is sometimes inadequate.

In addition, again relying on Wikipedia, "Morse code has a 21st century role as an assistive technology, helping people with a variety of disabilities to communicate. Morse can be sent by people with severe motion disability, as long as they have some minimal motor control. .... People with severe sensory disabilities (e.g. deaf and blind) can receive Morse through a skin buzzer." The safety issues here are obvious. In disasters, there are times when all of us may be unable to speak. Time is also an issue. Morse code signs and abbreviations speed communications in ways that spoken words cannot.

Given Morse code's historic and present contributions, I hope you would not only retain the Morse code requirement, but also provide funds for setting up ham radio clubs in schools throughout the United States. Successive generations of students should learn Morse code and the use of emergency radio.

Sincerely,



Ellen H. Wall  
cc: SF Chronicle, Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer

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